

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 IO-12

DPW-01 OMB-01 AID-20 TRSE-00 ORM-03 SR-02 RSR-01 /119 W
----- 003542

R 231242 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9130

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

USDEL FRANCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4857

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: CEASE FIRE SITREP MR 2 - MARCH 23, 1973

FOLLOWING SENT SAIGON 23 MAR 73 FROM C NHA TRNG REPEATED
FOR YOUR ACTION

QUOTE NHA TRANG 307

1. SUMMARY: MILITARY ACTIVITY REMAINS LIGHT, BUT REPORTED ENEMY
MOVEMENTS CAUSE CONCERN IN PHU YEN. KONTUM ICCS TEAM BEGINS TO
INVESTIGATE IN THE FIELD. GVN PLANNING CLEARING OPERATIONS IN
BINH DINH TO FACILITATE RETURN- TO- VILLAGE PROGRAM.

2. MILITARY SITUATION: MR 2 BRIEFING IN NHA TRANG, WHICH AGAIN
TODAY CARRIED NO REPORT OF ARVN 22 ND AND 23 RD DIV ACTIVITIES,
CITED ONLY A FEW ENEMY- INITIATED INCIDENTS, MAINLY SMALL- UNIT
GROUND ATTACKS ON TERRITORIAL FORCE POSITIONS IN BINH DINH, PHU
YEN AND BINH THUAN. MORE SERIOUS ACTION ANYWHERE IN MR
IS IN THANH AN DISTRICT, PLEIKU (23 RD DIV TERRITORY); IT INCLUDES
VNAF AIRSTRIKES AND CONTINUES TO PRODUCE CASUALTIES ON BOTH
SIDES. NEVERTHELESS, ARRO REP SAYS LAST SEVERAL DAYS HAVE BEEN
QUIETEST IN PLEIKU SINCE JAN 28.

3. RECENT INTELLIGENCE REPORTS GATHERED BY PHU YEN S-2 INDICATE
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INCREASED ENEMY TROOP MOVEMENT IN DONG TRE VALLEY AND CHI THANH PASS ARE OF DONG XUAN DISTRICT AND IN NORTHWESTERN PORTION OF TUY AN DISTRICT. GVN FORCES ARE PREPARING FOR POSSIBLE HEAVY CLASHES WITH VC UNITS IN THESE AREAS DURING NEXT TEN DAYS.

4. ICCS: KONTUM TEAM EMBARKED MAR 23 ON FIRST FIELD INVESTIGATION, LOOKING INTO ALLEGED NVA/ VC ATTACK ON RF IN CHU PAO PASS AREA EARLIER THIS MONTH. HERETOFORE, KONTUM TEAM HAD INVESTIGATED BY INVITING GVN SOLDIERS TO ICCS COMPOUND TO GIVE TESTIMONY. DESPITE THESE ARMCHAIR PROCEDURES, TEAM HAS RECENTLY SUBMITTED ITS FIRST TWO REPORTS OF INVESTIGATION TO REGIONAL HQ AT PLEIKU. BOTH REPORTS CONCLUDED WITHOUHDDISSENT THAT ENEMY HAD ATTACKED GVN POSITIONS.

5. BAN ME THUOT TEAM NOW HAS FOUR MORE INVESTIGATION REQUESTS FROM REGIONAL HQ IN PLEIKU; ALL CONCERN ALLEGED VC ATTACKS ON GVN UNITS. POLOFF SAYS GVN PROTESTS ARE INACCURATE (COORDINATES PLACE ONE OF THESE INCIDENTS IN PLEIKU RATHER THAN DARLAC) OR IMPRECISE AND ARE EVIDENTLY BEING FORWARDED WITHOUT CHECKING BY REGIONAL ICCS. THUS ANY INVESTIGATION BY SUB- REGIONAL TEAM MUST START FROM SCRATCH. FURTHERMORE, POLOFF BELIEVES ALLEGATIONS GVN IS PRESENTING MAY NOT BE STRONGEST ONES; REMAINING THREE INCIDENTS, ALL IN BUON HO DISTRICT

, MAY HAVE OCCURRED WHEN FRIENDLY UNITS WERE ON SWEEPS AND NOT IN DEFENSIVE POSTURE.

6. ICCS/ TUY AN BOYCOTT OF HIEU XUONG DISTRICT TOUR IN PHU YEN (SAIGON 4395, MAR 18 SIT REP) REMAINS CONTROVERSIAL. PC HAS PROTESTED TO FPJMC/ PLEIKU THAT CANCELLATION WAS IMPOLITE AND AN AFFRONT TO PROVINCE POPULATION AND LEADERSHIP. TUY AN CANDEL HAS MEANWHILE HEARD FROM REGIONAL CHIEF IN PLEIKU THAT REGIONAL INSTRUCTION TO CANDEL TO JOIN HUNGDEL IN BOYCOTT WAS A MISTAKE AND WILL NOT BE REPEATED.

7. ATTITUDES TOWARD FPJMC: GVN OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO BAN ME THUOT FPJMT HAVE RECEIVED ORDERS TRANSFERRING THEM TO PLEIKU FOR ONWARD ASSIGNMENT AS OF X- PLUS-60. MOST OF THEM REPORTEDLY WISHED TO RETURN TO FORMER JOBS IN DARLAC SECTOR AND ARE NOT PLEASED WITH THIS TURN OF EVENTS. ORDERS WOULD INDICATE GVN DOES NOT EXPECT LIFE OF FPJMC TO BE EXTENDED. (HAD BEEN CLEAR IN BMT FROM OUTSET THAT DIFFERENT OFFICERS WOULD STAFF GVN ELEMENT OF FPJMC.)

8. GVN MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT: BINH DINH
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PC TOLD POLOFF ON MAR 22 THAT WITHIN ONE WEEK ARVN UNITS WOULD

BEGIN TEN- DAY OPERATION TO CLEAR COASTAL AREAS OF TAM QUAN DISTRICT, WHICH NOW DEFENDED ONLY BY SMALL LOCAL- FORCE VC UNITS. AIM OF OPERATION IS TO IMPROVE SECURITY FOR RTV RESETTLERS, 13,000 OF WHOM HAVE ALREADY RETURNED TO TAM QUAN AND NEIGHBORING HOAI NHON DISTRICT. (US ADVISOR TO ARVN 22 ND DIV REPORTS CLEARING OPERATIONS ARE ALREADY UNDER WAY.) PC ALSO DISCLOSED PLANS TO CLEAR AND RESETTLE VINH THANH VALLEY IN BINH KHE DISTRICT; HERE AGAIN, ONE BATTALION OF 22 ND DIV REPORTEDLY ENTERED AREA LAST WEEK, BUT OTHER SOURCES INDICATED AT THE TIME THAT PURPOSE WAS MERELY TEMPORARY PROTECTION FOR RICE HARVEST. PC HAS NO PLANS, HOWEVER, TO TRY TO CLEAR ENEMY- HELD PORTIONS OF HOAI AN DISTRICT IN 1973. (SAME ADVISOR ADDS THAT CG OF 22 ND DIV INTENDS TO RETAKE ALL RICE LAND IN BINH DINH THAT IS NOT HEAVILY DEFENDED BY ENEMY FORCES; THIS WOULD MEAN VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING EXCEPT AN LAO AND HOAI AN VALLEYS.)

9. MEANWHILE, BINH DINH' S AMBITIOUS RTV PROGRAM FOR REFUGEES FROM NORTHERN DISTRICTS HAS RUN INTO SNAGS, WITH ALL MOVEMENT TO HOAI NHON AND TAM QUAN NOW HALTED PENDING EVALUATION OF ENTIRE PROGRAM AND SELECTION OF NEW SITES. NUMEROUS REFUGEES SELECTED FOR RETURN HAVE REFUSED TO BUDGE FOR REASONS OF SECURITY.

10. BINH DINH PC BELIEVES COMMUNISTS ARE PREPARING NEW OFFENSIVE WHICH WOULD BEGIN SHORTLY AFTER X- PLUS-60 AND WOULD SEEK TO CAPTURE TAM QUAN AND HOAI NHON DISTRICT TOWNS; TO EXPAND AREA OF CONTROL IN BINH KHE DISTRICT SOUTH TOWARD H QL-19; AND TO TAKE OVER SWATH OF TERRITORY IN SOUTHERN PHU CAT DISTRICT BETWEEN NUI BA MOUNTAIN AND GO BOI RIVER. PC CONCLUDED THAT HIS FORCES AND 22 ND DIV WOULD SUCCESSFULLY REPEL ANTICIPATED OFFENSIVE.

11. MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES FROM PLEIKU TO KONTUM IS AT OR NEAR ITS END. SOME 1300 MORE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN RELOCATED IN LAST TWO DAYS, BRINGING CUMULATIVE TOTAL SINCE MAR 9 TO APPROX 6,900. SOME 1,500 TO 3,000 (DEPENDING ON ESTIMATE) ETHNIC VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WHO HAVE PETITIONED PRESIDENT TO REMAIN IN PLEIKU WILL EVIDENTLY BE ALLOWED TO DO SO; KONTUM PC SAYS NO ONE WILL BE FORCED TO RETURN TO KONTU.

12. GVN POLITICAL ORGANIZING: DPC FOR ADMIN IN PLEIKU, AFTER CONSULTATIONS WITH MOI IN SAIGON, SAYS VILLAGE COUNCIL ELECTIONS NATION- WIDE WILL TAKE PLACE FROM APRIL THROUGH DEC. PLEIKU
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HAS ALREADY CHOSEN DATES AND LOCATIONS: JUNE 10 (20 VILLAGES) AND NOV 4 (THREE OTHERS). THE 23 VILLAGES CHOOSEN (NINE VIETNAMESE , 14 MONTAGNARD) ARE ONES WHERE TERMS OF INCUMBENT OFFICIALS HAVE ALREADY EXPIRED. HOWEVER, ARRO REP COMMENTS THAT CHOICES WERE

ALSO

MADE WITH AN EYE TO SECURITY AND REFLECT GVN CONFIDENCE THROUGHOUT
THE AREAS IT CLAIMS TO CONTROL. BARRING ANY DISRUPTION, HE
BELIEVES ALL VILLAGES ON LIST CAN BE EXPECTED TO FAVOR GVN- APPROVED
CANDIDATES AND IN PROCESS BASICALLY FRIENDLY POPULATION WILL
DEMONSTRATE ALLEGIANCE TO GVN, AS OPPOSED TO PRG, ADMINISTRATION.
ENGL UNQUOTE
BUNKER

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